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14. ABSTRACT Civil Service hiring within the federal government may be considered in exercise in futility. While many laws and regulations are in place to protect the fairness of the system, these same requirements also have a hand in creating a culture of confusion and difficulty when hiring. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM, 2008), which directs a majority of these regulations, has recognized this, and in turn, come out with specific "hiring flexibilities" whereby organizations can expedite the hiring of critical need positions in certain circumstances. While these steps seemed to have helped to a degree, other cascading factors (such as process flow and direct receipt) continue to delay the overall process and have yet to be fully addressed. This paper includes a systematic examination and evaluation of the civil service hiring process at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. Using a three-pronged approach, the hiring process will be divided into the following three stages: (1) the Current Process, (2) the Issue/Problems with the Current Process, and (3) Recommendations/Solutions to address the issues in the Current Process. Each of the first two stages is also categorized as to areas of responsibility (i.e. NMCP/Management, HRO, and HRSC-e), and each step or collection of steps in the process is clearly identified and discussed. Finally, existing recommendations are addressed to improve and streamline the process toward future growth and success.					
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Army-Baylor University Graduate Program in Health and
Business Administration

Mapping initiatives and streamlining processes:

An evaluation of civil service hiring at Naval Medical
Center

Portsmouth (NMCP)

By

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Abstract

Civil Service hiring within the federal government is considered by some as in exercise in futility. While many laws and regulations are in place to protect the fairness of the system, the same requirements create confusion and inefficiencies that greatly impact its efficacy. Certain flexibilities have helped to a degree, yet cascading factors such as process flow, miscommunication, and direct receipt, continue to delay hiring practices and have yet to be fully addressed. The purpose of this study is to engage in a systematic examination and evaluation of civil service hiring at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth in an attempt to identify impediments and provide specific recommendations for improvement. The resulting assessment is intended to be used as a management tool for streamlining the path toward future growth and success.

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this study are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, VA, the Department of the Navy, the Department of the Army, Department of Defense (DoD), or the United States Government.

Statement of Ethical Conduct in Research

Patient confidentiality was strictly adhered to during this research study. All patients' medical information was protected at all times and under no circumstances will be discussed or released to any outside agency.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Traditional Hiring Process.....	1
Portsmouth Structure.....	3
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Purpose Statement.....	6
The Current Process.....	6
Management / Manpower (NMCP).....	7
Human Resource Office (HRO).....	16
Human Resource Service Center-east (HRSC-e).....	20
Issues / Problems with the Current Process.....	24
Management / Manpower (NMCP).....	24
Human Resource Office (HRO).....	31
Human Resource Service Center-east (HRSC-e).....	33
Discussion.....	35
Civil Service Nurse Working Group.....	41
Civil Service Certification Reimbursement Program.....	41
Kenexa /MBS Pilot Program.....	42
References.....	47

List of Figures

Figure 1. NMCP Leadership Structure.....	4
Figure 2. Civil Service Hiring Process.....	7
Figure 3. Marketing Example (Multiple Media).....	43
Figure 4. Marketing Example (Billboard).....	44

List of Appendixes

Appendix A, Acronyms and Operational Definitions	48
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Introduction

Civil Service hiring within the federal government may be considered by many as in exercise in futility. Certain laws and regulations are in place to protect the fairness of the system, however, these same requirements also have a hand in creating a culture of confusion and difficulty when hiring. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM, 2008), which directs a majority of these regulations, has recognized this, and in turn, come out with specific hiring flexibilities whereby organizations can expedite the hiring of critical need positions in certain circumstances. While these steps seemed to have helped to a degree, other cascading factors (such as process flow and direct receipt) continue to delay the overall process and have yet to be fully addressed.

The Traditional Hiring Process

Many existing Navy Human Resources Office's (HRO), can trace their beginnings back a period of sixty to seventy years as civilian personnel offices were established to assist in civilian recruitment efforts generated by World War II (Department of the Navy (DON), 2003). While these early offices consisted of only five staff members providing basic personnel support to nearly 300 civilian employees, today's Human Resource Offices, many now

operating under the command and control of Chief, Naval Installations (CNI), have over 150 staff, servicing over 21,000 civilian employees and hundreds of naval activities. Over the years, this massive expansion, combined with HR regionalization efforts by the Department of the Navy, led to the establishment of geographically dispersed Human Resources Service Centers (HRSCs). The HRSC organizations assumed from HRO offices the responsibility for personnel action processing and other non-advisory or backroom tasks (DON, 2003). The expectation that HROs could concentrate on strategic advisory services and, subsequently, allow the HRSCs to take over as personnel action processors, drove the change.

In 1992, personnel offices at Naval Amphibious Base, Little Creek, Naval Air Station, Oceana and Naval Hospital, Portsmouth were disestablished and service responsibility moved to the CCPO, at which time the activity name changed to Human Resources Office (HRO), Norfolk. For the first time, forward deployed HRO staff was placed in geographically dispersed locations. It was, in fact, the beginning of regional delivery of personnel services from multiple delivery points. Customer base for HRO Norfolk now stood at about 10000 employees. This change also modified the basic concept that only individual small activities

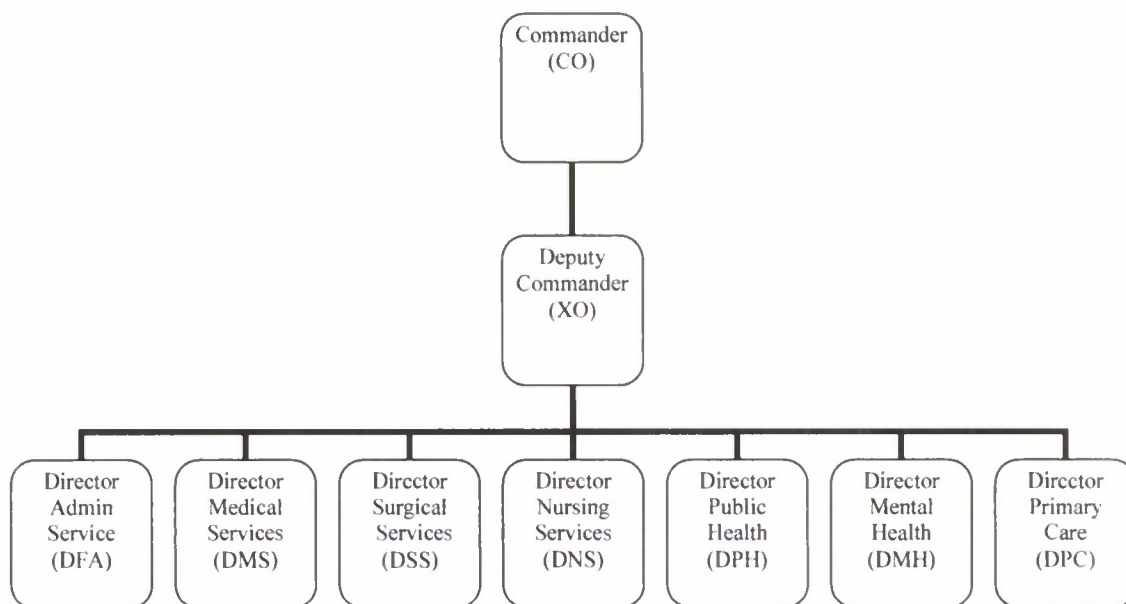
were serviced. In fact, the Naval Hospital became, overnight, the largest customer activity not only to whom, but from which, service was provided, becoming the first of HRO Norfolk's serviced commands to retain an on-site complement of personnelists (DON, 2003). The problem was that the separation of these two organizations, HRO and HRSC, with distinct responsibilities and chains of command, began to create a culture of ambiguity and lack of communication, and, as a result, the servicing activity (the Customer) experienced delays in the hiring process.

Portsmouth Structure

This past year, in an attempt to standardize structures throughout Navy Medicine, the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) issued specific guidelines in a document titled 2008 Standard Organization. In aligning with this new doctrine, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth formed a senior leadership structure consisting of the Commander, the Deputy Commander, and the Executive Steering Committee (ESC). The Commander, akin to a CEO in a civilian healthcare organization, sits atop this organization and assumes overall responsibility. The Deputy Commander, second in command and similar to a COO, typically manages the day-to-day operations of the organization. Lastly, the Executive Steering Committee consists of the thirteen

hospital Directors: Director for Administration (DFA), Director for Medical Services (DMS), etc. This body assists the Commander and Deputy Commander in setting the strategic mission, vision, and goals for the organization. Within each directorate are lower level leaders and managers like Deputy Directors, Department Heads, Division Officers, and Clinic Managers (See figure 1).

Figure 1. NMCP Leadership Structure.



* Note - The Executive Steering Committee (ESC) membership illustrated above serves only as an example of structure, and is not fully inclusive of all members.

Specifically relating to Manpower and Civilian Personnel is the Human Resource Department (HRD) at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. In addition to other mission-critical divisions, this department, under the DFA, also

houses the following divisions which, among other things, are responsible for processing and analyzing civilian personnel Management actions: Manpower/CIVPERS, Classification, Defense Medical Human Resource System - internet (DMHRSi), and Activity Manning Document (AMD).

Statement of the Problem

There are many complex parts associated with the civil service hiring process at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. As a result, there exists a set of cascading problems/issues that need to be addressed. One of those most obvious of these issues is that of the separation of powers, each with separate doctrines, which now exist between the three main organizations involved in the hiring process (NMCP, HRO, and HRSC-e). This separation has resulted in a culture of ambiguity and lack of communication and/or accountability. As a result, both the servicing activity and the beneficiaries it serves experience significant delays. Secondly, certain laws, regulations, and requirements on competitive federal hiring contained in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Office of Personnel Management (OPM) guidance, and the like, (and accurate interpretation and implementation of these regulations) have restricted and/or hand-cuffed hiring

managers in filling traditionally hard-to-fill and critically-needed positions (OPM, 2008).

Finally, a combination of both issues mentioned above, along with a long history of short-term fixes have led to an arduous and lengthy hiring process in which it is taking, on average, nearly six to nine months for new hires to begin employment.

Purpose Statement

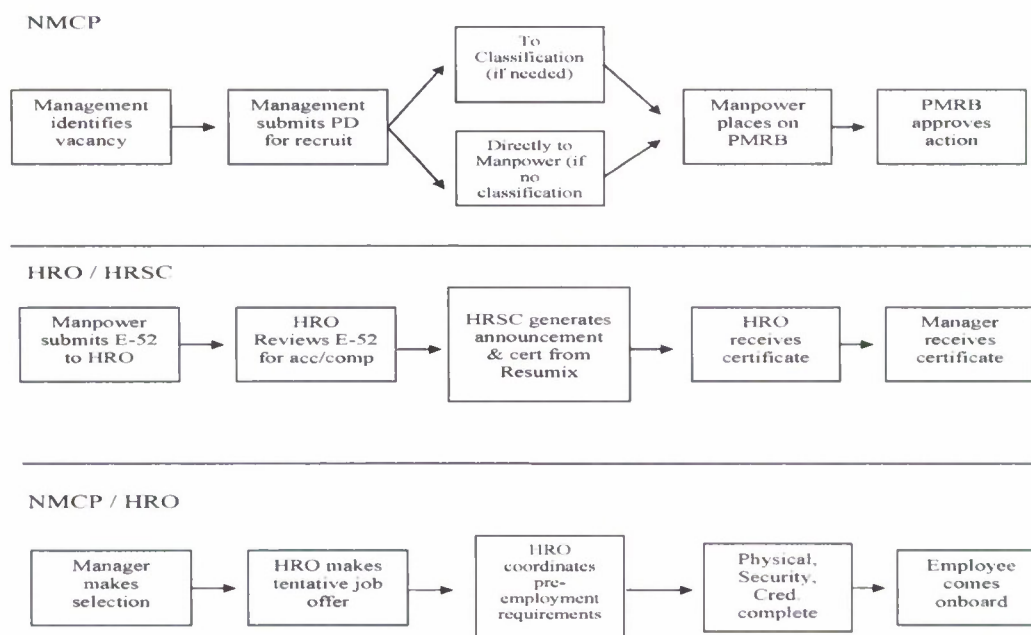
The purpose of this paper is to conduct a systematic examination and evaluation of the civil service hiring process at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. Using a three-pronged approach, the hiring process will be divided into the following three stages: (1) the Current Process, (2) the Issue/Problems with the Current Process, and (3) Recommendations/Solutions to address the issues in the Current Process. Each of the first two stages is also categorized as to areas of responsibility, NMCP/Management, HRO, and HRSC-e. Each step or collection of steps in the process is clearly identified and discussed. Finally, recommendations are addressed to improve and streamline the existing process toward future growth and success.

The Current Process

The current civil service hiring process at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth involves the coordination of

three specific organizations: the facility itself (NMCP), the Human Resource Office, Norfolk (HRO), and the Human Resource Service Center - East (HRSC-e). Figure 2, below, depicts an abbreviated version of the specific processes involved for each organization. As mentioned above, each organizational process will be further detailed in the sections forthcoming.

Figure 2. Civil Service Hiring Process.



Management / Manpower (NMCP)

1. Vacancy Identification

- Resignation, Retirement, New billet

This stage marks the beginning of the hiring process.

Vacancies typically become identified when one of the

following occur: (1) resignation, (2) retirement, (3) promotions and/or reassignments to another DOD system, or (4) additional billets/positions are added to the department. At this stage Management becomes aware of a vacancy and, thus, must decide which action to take as a result. While typically they choose to recruit for this vacancy, Management may also choose other options at this point (i.e., giving this billet to another directorate or department or choosing to use it as an off-set for an increase in pay for another position). For the sake of argument, and since 95 percent of these are indeed backfilled, proceed to the next step in the process.

2. Personnel Action Form (SF-52)

- Submitted by Management
- Justification
- Required signatures

This step requires Management to complete the documentation for filling a vacancy. The first form in this process is the Request for Personnel Action Form (SF-52). Management is responsible for completing this form, with required justification if needed and forwarding to Manpower via the chain of command. Circumstances involving multiple directorates require corresponding directorate approval. A signed memorandum of understanding addressing this move must accompany the SF-52 submitted to Manpower for

processing. Due to high turnover and/or inexperience, many managers lack an understanding of the process, thus Manpower may be consulted repeatedly throughout a typical day to assist.

3. Position Description

- New PD needed?
 - Management's responsibility to keep PD up-to-date
 - Advisory Classification
 - Change in grade?
 - Competitive vs. Non-Competitive (GS vs. NSPS)
 - Directorate approval

This first question in this stage is whether a new position description (PD) is needed. If the PD is current and accurately reflects the duties of the existing position, Management can move forward to the next step: routing the SF-52 to Manpower via the appropriate Director(s) to process. If, however, this is a new position entailing a classified PD, or the existing PD is outdated, then Management should prepare the necessary documentation for an Advisory Classification. Under the latter scenario, Management submits the draft PD directly to the Classification Division, who will then forward it to Civilian Personnel (CIVPERS) when complete.

Once Classification receives the required documentation from Management (SF-52, new PD, and old PD (if applicable), they will contact Management directly to review the process

and assist in drafting the new PD. Once the draft is complete, Classification will then provide an advisory classification for this position and forward the SF-52 and classified PD to CIVPERS/Manpower to process.

4. SF-52 routed to Manpower

- Hand-carry with original signatures
- Input into Access database (CIVPERS)

Once received, either from Management or classification, CIVPERS/Manpower begins to process this action to the Human Resource Office (HRO). Of particular importance with regard to receipt of these actions is how CIVPERS/Manpower receives the actions. The current policy is that hard copies with original signatures are required. However, some discussion regarding variable methods have occurred and will be discussed in later sections.

Once the personnel action is officially received by CIVPERS/Manpower, the first step is to forward the action via email to the Budget Analyst in the Finance Department to determine cost. When cost determination is completed, Budget returns the information to CIVPERS/Manpower so it can be added to the PMRB Agenda.

5. Manpower places actions on PMRB agenda

At this point, CIVPERS/Manpower places all personnel actions forwarded by Management on the agenda for the command's Personnel Management Review Board (PMRB).

6. PMRB

- Meets twice a month
- Budget/Funding available
- Position Management discussions
- PMRB can approve, disapprove, defer, or table

This body, whose membership is currently the same as the Executive Steering Committee (ESC), meets on the first and third Thursday of each month, and is responsible for managing all civil service positions at the command. Once deliberations are complete, resulting decisions may be categorized as: (a) approve the action, (b) disapprove the action, (c) defer the action, or (d) the action is tabled to be brought back at a later date. If the action is approved, the process is continued. If the action is disapproved, it is essentially dead and will not be brought back to this body in the same format. If the action is deferred, it is placed on the Unfunded list. It then becomes the responsibility of the appropriate director to add this item to a future PMRB agenda. Lastly, if the action is tabled, it is rescheduled for a later date whereby additional information can be presented.

7. Approved SF-52 to Manpower for processing

- Additional items gathered, if necessary
 - DD214 / Statement of service
 - Resume
- For example, is this position being filled via a "Name Request"? If so, CIVPERS/Manpower coordinates efforts to obtain additional documentation needed for this type of action (specifically a DD214 or statement of service and a resume).

Once a personnel action is approved by the PMRB, CIVPERS/Manpower then inquires as to the details of the recruitment action.

8. Manpower processes personnel action to HRO

- Via Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS - also known as "modern")
- HRO's group in-box

Once all documentation is complete, CIVPERS/Manpower then enters the action into DCPDS/Modern and electronically submits it to HRO. CIVPERS remains ready to correct any errors discovered by HRO and/or HRSC.

9. Receive certificate from HRSC

- Internal / External
- Selection requirements

At this point the action has been forwarded to both HRO and HRSC. A certificate delineating qualified candidates obtained from the job announcement process is provided to Management for review and selection. Depending on the type of recruitment, either internal or external, Management will receive one of two possible types of certificates.

With an internal certificate, Management receives an alphabetical list of candidates from which selections may be made. These are typically easier to make a selection as Management may select whomever he or she desires and is deemed most qualified for the position. External certificates require different rules and regulations such as the "Rule of Three". This rule states that the hiring manager must choose from one of the top three ranked candidates on any external certificate. The only exception is if one of the top three candidates declines the position, in which the next candidate (number four and so on) may now be included. External certificates may also contain numerically ranked candidates based on specific preference factors (one example being a disability). These candidates typically score higher (very often near the top) on this preferential ranking list. In this situation, a hiring manager may not select candidates lower down on the ranking list unless all the preferential candidates have declined the position.

10. Work through interview / selection process with

HRO/HRSC-e & Management

Due to the selection rules mentioned above, combined with continual turnover among hiring managers, Management is dependent upon help from both the local HRO and HRSC in

setting up interviews and making selections from a particular certificate.

11. Candidate chosen from cert

After working the details of the certificate, with the assistance of HRO and/or HRSC-e, Management makes a selection from the list of available and qualified candidates.

12. Fill out Cert cover sheet and forward to HRO and HRSC

- If candidate declines offer, work with HRO to re-interview / select

Once a selection is made, Management must return the certificate cover sheet with the identified selection to HRO and HRSC-e. Depending on whether declinations occurred, Management is required to forward any verbal declination forms to HRO/HRSC-e as well.

13. Candidate accepts verbal, tentative job offer

- Work with HRO to determine compensation issues, if applicable
- PMRB may need to see again if candidate desires increase salary
- Manpower will prepare for PMRB, if necessary

At this stage, Management has made a selection and HRO has received approval from HRSC-e to offer the candidate the job. If the candidate accepts the job offer, HRO will begin the "on-boarding" process. If, however, the candidate declines the offer, HRO will notify Management of this

declination, and in many cases, the process may need to start over. A third option (beside simply accept and/or decline) also exists for the candidate. This occurs if the candidate accepts, pending compensation negotiation. For example, if the position is for a nurse, and HRO offers a GS-11, Step 1, the candidate may express a desire for a higher step level due to experience. At this point, HRO notifies both Management and HRD. If Management agrees to negotiate, HRO will inquire as to the step level requested by the candidate. Once identified, HRD will add this as an action item for the next PMRB. If approved, HRO may then offer the higher step level to the candidate, and if accepted, may begin the "on-boarding" process. If the PMRB disapproves the higher step level (for any number of reasons), Management must work with HRO and HRD to start over or make an alternate selection.

14. Assist, as necessary with "on-boarding" and pre-employment needs

While the end of the process for Management, this process may take some time. On-boarding requirements must be met prior to the individual beginning employment. These include, but are not limited to, the following: physical examination, drug testing, credentialing, and background investigations.

Human Resource Office, Norfolk - NMCP Satellite Office

(HRO)

1. Validations and QC of forms

- Correct or return incorrect to Manpower

In most instances, this is the first time an action is reviewed for Quality Control, accuracy, and completeness by an agency outside NMCP. HRO ensures each action is properly completed prior to forwarding it to HRSC-e for processing.

2. Name Request via Hiring Authority

- Qualification determination
- Appropriate appointing authority

As more personnel actions are submitted with a "Name Request", HRO must guarantee two things upon receipt. First, they review the candidate and the proposed position to certify that the candidate being requested is qualified for the position. Secondly, HRO ensures that the appropriate appointing and hiring authorities are used depending on the position and/or the candidate's qualifications.

3. Discuss strategic and tactical recruiting plan with
Management

At this stage, HRO communicates directly with the hiring managers to determine their needs and desires for this

position. Discussions lead to a strategic and/or tactical recruiting method and plan. For example, based on HRO's input, the hiring manager may choose to recruit internally (existing DOD employees) or externally (any U.S. Citizen). As different rules and regulations apply for each, it is imperative that HRO discuss these options with each hiring manager.

4. Process personnel action to HRSC-e group box

Once HRO has reviewed recruitment methods with the hiring manager, they will forward the personnel action to HRSC-e for processing.

5. Work with Management with interview / cert selection processes

The hiring manager receives a certificate from the HRSC-e with a list of names of potential candidates for the job. In theory, candidates have been pre-screened, and the hiring manager simply needs to conduct interviews and make a selection. HRO assists the hiring manager in making a selection.

6. Receive Cert back from Management

Savvy hiring managers will forward completed certificates directly to HRSC-e, though most will work through HRO to return them.

7. Enter data into Resumix and DCPDS

After reviewing and verifying the information received from hiring managers, HRO enters the information into Resumix and DCPDS and forwards it to HRSC-e for action.

8. Receive authorization from HRSC to make job offer

- Make verbal, tentative offer to candidate
- If candidate does not accept, are additional candidates on cert?
- If so, work with Management to interview / make additional selections

The Priority Placement Program (PPP) must be cleared for any vacancy. Upon completion, HRSC-e sends HRO an authorization to make a tentative job offer. If the candidate accepts, HRO informs the hiring manager and begins the "on-boarding" process. If the candidate declines, HRO must work with HRD and the hiring manager to identify alternatives. In some instances alternates have been chosen by Management and additional interviews and/or job offers may occur.

9. Work with Management/Manpower to discuss compensation issues, if applicable

- PMRB may need to see if issues arise

Specific compensation issues typically arise as a result of HRO's tentative job offer. For example, a nurse may request a higher GS step level due to the experience they have in clinical environments. These requests must be routed to the PMRB for approval.

10. Prepare and send tentative offer letter with Pre-employment package & required forms

- Many forms, including security

11. Code the RPA and forward to HRSC (QC as necessary to work any issues)

Upon completion of all compensation related issues in the job offer stages, HRO coordinates new hire documentation being sent to the new employee.

12. Notify appropriate authorities to complete necessary work for the following:

- Physical
- Drug Test
- Credentialing
- Security Investigation

HRO assists in "on-boarding" the candidate by coordinating the completion of the following: physical examinations, drug testing, credentialing, and security background investigations.

13. Continue to assist and monitor, as necessary, all "on-boarding" and pre-employment processes until Entry on Duty (EOD) can be set.

14. Notify Management/Manpower of EOD date.

The final step in the hiring process occurs the days the employee reports to work. This date is referred to as the Entry on Duty (EOD) date. Upon completion of requisite

documentation, HRO/HRSC-e notifies HRD and the hiring manager of the candidate's EOD date.

Human Resource Service Center - East (HRSC-e)

1. Perform QA on all documents

- If errors, send back to HRO for rework

HRSC-e reviews paperwork forwarded from the HRO for accuracy and completeness. If necessary, they return items for correction and/or clarification.

2. Create case file and build position in DCPDS

An administrative step in the process, whereby HRSC-e builds an electronic record of the position in DCPDS.

3. Determine recruiting method

- Direct Hire
- Internal
- External

As determined by the hiring manager, HRSC-e validates the recruiting method for the position, typically one of three choices. The first choice is "Direct Hire", a recruiting method that arises out of a "Name Select" wherein the candidate is aligned under a specific hiring authority established by OPM/OCHR. One such authority is that of Veterans' Preference (VRA). The other two recruiting paths are that of internal or external. Internal recruitment is directed at existing civil service employees and the scope may be narrowed to specific components and/or activities

(i.e., only DON employees). External, on the other hand, is open to all U.S. citizens.

4. Review recruitment information

- PD
- Case File
- Job Analysis
- Etc.

An extensive review period is conducted by HRSC-e in which they review all the data associated with the position (PD, case file, etc.) and conduct a job analysis. The review must be completed prior to placing an official announcement.

5. Announcements

- Check Open Continuous Announcements
- Create, post, monitor, and apply an announcement, if necessary
- Forward copy of announcement to HRO

In generic terms, an announcement may be considered similar to an advertisement in the newspaper and is required for any position created. HRSC-e will confirm whether an open continuous announcement exists. These announcements are permanent and typically include jobs that have a frequent fill and/or high turnover rate, as with nurses and medical assistants. With permanent announcements, there is no need to create and post an announcement specific to a new position. However, in the

absence of a continuous announcement, it is necessary to create, post, monitor, and apply a specific notice as new positions are created. This can be a lengthy process, depending on the needs of the hiring managers and the duration of the announcement.

6. Identify source of candidates

- Work with HRO to identify sources of candidates

7. Call recruit to discuss position requirements (1st contact)

HRSC-e works with HRO to indentify and validate the specific sourcing of candidates and assists HRO in making initial contact with potential recruits to determine qualifications.

8. Priority Placement Program (PPP)

- Is there a match?
- Cert Issued from Priority Placement in priority order
- Does Management make selection from cert?

A legal and necessary step in the hiring process regardless of the recruitment method, the Priority Placement Program (PPP) assists governmental agencies in placing qualified candidates into government-sponsored employment. Essentially, the PPP screens all new positions to indentify candidates whose qualifications meet the selection criteria. If a match occurs, HRO/HRSC-e must

validate the selection. Due to specific qualification requirements, the potential for a match typically increases with lower grade administrative positions. The duration of this step varies by professional requirements. For example, lesser skilled administrative positions take longer due to an increase in qualified candidates.

9. Build the position and populate the Request for Personnel Action (RPA)

- Create a requisition in Resumix
- Create the Resume Search / Crediting Plan
- Crediting plan skills
- Perform search and analysis results
- Determine and Document eligibility and qualifications

HRSC-e begins the steps required to build an electronic version of the position and conducts resume searches to populate a certificate of qualified candidates.

10. Close PPP, if applicable

This is an important step in the process as it enables the hiring process to continue (at least in one direction or another). If the PPP candidate is qualified for the position, they must be selected and the on boarding process begins. If the PPP candidate is not qualified or none exists, the Name Select or normal certification process may continue.

11. Track applicant to requisitions and document cert decisions in Resumix

- Issue certificate to Management / hiring authority & HRO (2nd contact)
- Review returned cert & clear RPL
- Receive coded and QC's RPA from HRO
- Close out position.

HRSC-e populates, screens candidates, and forwards certificates to the hiring manager for interview and selection. HRSC-e also provides assistance to managers in the certificate selects process and provides HRO the authority to make tentative job offers.

Issues/Problems with the Current Process

This section will discuss various issues and/or problems with specific steps in the Current Process. A few examples are the following: navigating HR-related sites like www.usajobs.com, coordination of the on-boarding process, recruiting strategies, communication between HRD, HRO, and HRSC-e, etc. In addition, and in keeping with the stepwise flow of the process, these issues have been categorized into the following areas of responsibility: NMCP, HRO, and HRSC-e.

Management/Manpower (NMCP)

1. Vacancy Identification

- Resignation, Retirement, New billet
- Personnel Action Form (SF-52)

- Submitted by Management
- Justification
- Required signatures

The majority of issues surrounding these early steps involve the lack of Management's experience with human resources. They are not expected to have much experience in this arena. It is more an issue with the system that does not actively engage Management providing the assistance they need. The reason they are not given this assistance is multi-faceted. First and foremost, the experts in civilian staffing, HRO, is over burdened processing actions that they cannot provide advisory support that Management desperately needs. Due to gaps in the existing service agreements between NMCP, HRO, and HRSC-e, HRO began addressing personnel matter that were never included in their intended responsibilities. In addition, NMCP is currently bound to route all personnel actions through HRO before forwarding them to HRSC-e. Many see this as a duplication of efforts and plans are underway to avoid this extra step thereby decreasing HRO's workload and allowing them to reclaim their intended place at Management's side.

2. Position Description

- New PD needed?
 - Management's responsibility to keep PD up-to-date
- Advisory Classification

- o Change in grade?
 - o Competitive vs. Non-Competitive (GS vs. NSPS)
- Directorate approval

Perhaps the most contentious steps in the hiring process include inaccuracies with and the classification of PDs. The key reason is the sheer number of position descriptions that have become outdated and inaccurate. The annual civilian performance review process accounts for this in that the employee is given an opportunity to indicate whether the position description is accurate. Management's acknowledgement of this specific employee input has been sporadic at best conceivably because they unaware that options exist. In addition, many of the hospital's 1800 civilian employees are not familiar with the content of their own position descriptions. Another aspect of the process involving position descriptions is that of the position classification. There are myriad reasons that Management requests classification and/or reclassification of a position, and communication throughout this process may be cumbersome. As a result, vacant positions can be stalled in classification for some time.

3. SF-52 routed to Manpower

- Hand-carry with original signatures
- Input into Access database (CIVPERS)

Issues surrounding the delivery of personnel actions to the CIVPERS Division generally involve tracking. Currently, hiring managers or their representatives hand-carry personnel action forms (SF-52s) to CIVPERS once the appropriate clinical director approves the action for processing. The problem here is that no tracking mechanism exists to aid the hiring manager and CIVPERS Division in determining the status of a hiring action resulting in the mishandling of documents. This may cause additional delays in the processing of certain actions.

4. PMRB

- Meets twice a month
- Budget/Funding available
- Position Management discussions
- PMRB can approve, disapprove, or defer

Upon receipt by CIVPERS, Finance reviews funding and the action is then placed on the agenda for the next scheduled PMRB. Concerns pertaining to the PMRB typically have to do with standard business rules, or lack thereof. Over the years, this body has developed rules to handle specific circumstances that arise. For example, the PMRB recently decided not to add simple backfills to the agenda for approval. An example of this is a GS-11 clinical nurse, working Labor and Delivery (L&D) that may have recently retired. The hiring manager would simply submit an SF-52 to

CIVPERS and this position would be considered pre-approved for recruitment. While this does indeed decrease the workload for the PMRB, there are a few caveats that go along with each one of the actions. For example, this pre-approval exists only if the new candidate accepts the job at a level equal to or lower than the previous incumbent, which is considered cost neutral. Another related issue is that of the definition of simple backfill. Suppose a GS-11 L&D nurse vacancy becomes available, however the organization would like to recruit for a GS-11 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) nurse. The new position is cost neutral, yet it is no longer considered a simple backfill. The business rules associated with defining and hiring backfills are ambiguous.

5. Manpower processes personnel action to HRO

- Via DCPDS (modern)
- HRO's group in-box

The processing of an action from HRO to HRSC-e includes multiple issues and problems. The most apparent is the requirement to process a personnel action through the HRO, which is not a hard and fast rule across Navy Medicine. For example, other organizations such as BUMED and Nationwide Recruiting Group (NRG) Philadelphia process actions directly to their respective HRSCs via a Direct Receipts

program thus eliminating duplicate processing by HRO. This program allows the HRO to concentrate on its role in advising Management at the front end of the process.

6. Certificate Receipt and Selection

- o Receive cert from HRSC-e
- o Internal / External
- o Selection requirements
- o Work through interview / selection process with HRO & Management
- o Candidate chosen from cert
- o Fill out Cert cover sheet and forward to HRO and HRSC
- o If candidate declines offer, work with HRO to re-interview / select

There are a variety of reasons why hiring managers may be unfamiliar with the certification process, most having to do with military turnover rates. NMCP's hiring managers are typically military division officers and/or department heads who, in addition to administrative responsibilities, typically have major clinical roles in their respective divisions or departments. It is a bit unrealistic to expect these individuals to understand the ever-changing rules and regulations in what can be a very complex hiring process. Thus, it is imperative each directorate has a responsible HR representative dedicated to these activities and serving as a point of contact for each hiring manager. Returning HRO to the deck plate can greatly benefit the command.

7. Candidate accepts verbal, tentative job offer

- Work with HRO to determine compensation issues, if applicable
- PMRB may need to see again if candidate desires increase salary
- Manpower will prepare for PMRB, if necessary

One of the major issues surrounding the job offer is that HRO does not have the ability to negotiate directly with the candidate. If HRO offers a candidate a Step 1 and the candidate requests a Step 5, HRO must forward this request back to the PMRB for a decision. As the PMRB only meets twice a month, there may be up to a two week delay prior to getting an approval or disapproval response. This causes major delays in the hiring process and has the potential to cause a declination from the potential new employee.

8. Assist, as necessary with "on-boarding" and pre-employment needs

This final step in the process for managers can sometimes be the most grueling as it often takes the most time. This stage involves the "on boarding" phase of the process required prior to a candidate reporting for work and involves completing the following: physical examination, drug screening, credentialing, and background investigations. Problems arise from a lack of coordination, communication, and responsibility or accountability.

Human Resource Office, Norfolk - NMCP Satellite Office

(HRO)

1. Validations and QC of forms

- Correct or return incorrect to Manpower

HRO's involvement in the validation and quality control of forms results in a duplication of efforts. Hiring managers, Directors, and CIVPERS staff already validate each action item prior to forwarding it for processing. In addition, HRSC-e validates action items for accuracy and completeness, and returns those in need of correction.

2. Discuss strategic and tactical recruiting plan with Management

Due to the current process flow, strategic and tactical recruiting is typically done too late in the process, or at the last minute, resulting in rework and additional delays in the hiring process. Often this occurs because Management is unaware that specificity (internal or external recruiting) is beneficial especially when name requests are desired.

3. Work with Management with interview / cert selection processes

- Receive certification from Management
- Enter data into Resumix and DCPDS

Due to HRO's current role as an intermediary processor of personnel actions, HRO does not have the resources to properly advise and assist Management as originally intended. Inclusion of this step alone would dramatically decrease the amount of time Management spends dealing with certificate selections.

4. Receive authorization from HRSC to make job offer and make verbal, tentative offer to candidate

- If candidate does not accept, are additional candidates on cert?
- If so, work with Management to interview / make additional selections
- Work with Management/Manpower to discuss compensation issues, if applicable
- PMRB may need to see if issues arise
- Prepare and send tentative offer letter with Pre-employment package & required forms
- Many forms, including security
- Code the RPA and forward to HRSC (QC as necessary to work any issues)

Between receiving authorization from HRSC-e and coding the RPA, and prior to extending a job offer to the candidate, a number of issues may develop. HRO acts on behalf of the hiring manager and must stay in constant communication with them in order to effectively coordinate visits (if applicable), gain approval to negotiate salaries, etc.

5. Continue to assist and monitor, as necessary, all "on-boarding" and pre-employment processes until Entry on Duty (EOD) can be set.

- Notify appropriate authorities to complete necessary work for the following:
 - Physical
 - Drug Test
 - Credentialing
 - Security Investigation
- Notify Management/Manpower of EOD date.

Historically, the HRO is the primary point of contact for newly hired employees. They send all of the necessary pre-employment paperwork to the new employee and serve as the single point in the collection and dissemination of this paperwork to the appropriate departments within the activity. Documents include physical examinations, drug testing, credentialing, and background investigation forms. HRO also serves as the agency responsible for notifying CIVPERS and appropriate hiring managers of new employee entry on duty (EOD) dates. The issue, of course, is that there are plenty of holes in each of the processes, and as the activity does not own these processes, it has very little control and oversight over them.

Human Resource Service Center - East (HRSC-e)

1. Perform QA on all documents

- If errors, send back to HRO for rework

This is actually a proper step in the process as the HRSC-e should be validating all documents received. The issue, however, is that this is also done earlier in the process (by both the activity and the HRO) creating unnecessary duplication.

2. Recruiting Methods

- Direct Hire
- Internal/External
- Review recruitment information
- PD
- Case File
- Job Analysis
- Etc.
- Announcements
- Check Open Continuous Announcements
- Create, post, monitor, and apply an announcement, if necessary
- Forward copy of announcement to HRO

Recruiting methods involve working with HRO to ensure an accurate PD and announcement are developed. Again, the problem here is that Management has to relay information via the HRO often causing confusion and delays in the process. In an ideal situation, HRO would already be in strategic discussions with hiring managers and/or directorate representatives and answering important questions up front. In this way, the hiring manager could discuss their requirements and decisions directly with the HRSC-e.

3. Build the position and populate the Request for Personnel

Action (RPA)

- Create a requisition in Resumix
- Create the Resume Search / Crediting Plan
- Crediting plan skills
- Perform search and analysis results
- Determine and Document eligibility and qualifications

The qualification determination step cited by the HRSC-e is often not done or is completed only in the most basic of terms. Nearly half of qualified candidates that appear on managers' certificates no longer desire the position or do not meet the specific qualification requirements for the position.

Discussion

The previous two sections, The Current Process and Issues with the Current Process, clearly identify and delineate specific steps. The next section, Recommendations, serves to aggregate processes and recommendations going forward. Therefore, specific steps are replaced with recommended process changes and potential solutions to address issues mentioned previously. Recommendations and potential solutions reviewed below do follow the same order as above.

First and foremost, is the proper alignment of the Human Resource Office (HRO) within Naval Medical Center Portsmouth (NMCP). As originally intended when the HR function split up (DON, 2003), the ideal alignment of the satellite HRO at NMCP is in a frontline Management advisory role vice the current position as intermediary processor between the command and HRSC-e. The processing of personnel actions must be left to the experts (HRSC-e). Proper delegation reduces duplication of work and allows for a more precise personnel action tracking mechanism between the command and the servicing HRSC.

Reducing the administrative burden on the HRO enables the office to better serve the strategic demands of its customer (NMCP). HRO may deploy personnel to support hiring managers, assisting them in strategic and tactical hiring decisions, and facilitating communication when important decisions must be made. For example, HRO can easily advise Management on the most effective recruitment method (internal verses external) to meet specific needs, thus dramatically reducing hiring delays and rework associated with last minute changes in strategic recruitment methods. In addition, HRO would be ideally placed to advise Management, in advance, regarding new and existing appointing authorities, such as VRA and Direct Hire

Authority. Such authorities were instituted to expedite critical needs; however, they have been used only sporadically because hiring managers tend to be unfamiliar with them. Lastly, HRO would be poised to assist managers in the certificate selection process and eventual "on boarding" of chosen candidates. Staffing specialists from HRO understand the certificate selection process very well and could easily assist managers in submitting accurate qualification information, setting up interviews, and making appropriate and legal selections.

A second recommendation is for each of NMCP's thirteen directorates to appoint a Human Resources (HR) Representative to oversee directorate-level civilian personnel actions. This recommendation would greatly assist the CIVPERS Division and HRO staff in communicating with each directorate. It would also enable each directorate to track actions, vacancies, etc., more efficiently and effectively. The HR Representative would act as the single directorate point-of-contact for all matters relating to civilian employees within their respective directorates. They would maintain an active tracking system, with information provided by both CIVPERS and HRO, to assist their respective Directors in strategic civilian decision-making. In addition, some recent discussions support

extending to these representatives, and/or departmental hiring managers, the authority to make tentative job offers once approval has been given by the servicing HRSC. Eventually, to unburden the Executive Steering Committee who currently makes up the PMRB as well, HR Representatives would assume membership of the PMRB making tactical civilian hiring decisions at the directorate level.

A third recommendation surrounds some of the issues associated with the PMRB. Specifically, business rules must be developed and implemented to effectively address issues within this complex, nebulous arena. Over the next several months, each line item, or set of items from existing rules not otherwise documented, could be vetted at the PMRB and, if officially approved and adopted, transferred to the new document. One example includes hiring flexibilities wherein issues are vetted only piecemeal during PMRB meetings. Yet to be formalized is an official hiring flexibilities plan covering multiple scenarios, as with a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) manual. Hiring flexibilities, once implemented in their entirety, will allow HRO the authority to negotiate a salary range with a potential candidate without incurring the type of delays seen in the current process today.

The classification system is another aspect of the process that must be retooled. BUMED has recognized the need for a more consistent classification system and implemented standardized PDs for certain job families within the new National Personnel Security System (NSPS). This effort must be expanded to include all PDs allowing not only for a uniform system across the enterprise, but also a dramatic reduction in the overall number of Navy Medicine PDs in existence. Collaborating with DOD, OCHR, and OPM, such actions would normalize what is today a very subjective classification system and allow for locality adjustments and regional differences.

One idea that could be immediately employed is that of tracking personnel actions throughout the organization. Whether following a PD to be classified or an SF-52 being delivered from Management to CIVPERS, a comprehensive tracking database or spreadsheet would drastically reduce errors and delays. The solution could be as simple as a locally-maintained MS Excel spreadsheet including dated receipt and action columns or as complex as a centrally maintained electronic routing system.

The last recommendation has to do with potential candidates and assisting them in navigating the complex system of rules and requirements. Initially, the candidate

pool could be helped to navigate the existing federal government Websites, such as <http://www.usajobs.gov/>. After hiring, NMCP must develop a new system by which candidates accepting vacant positions are allowed report to work in an efficient manner. In order to accomplish these tasks, a new NMCP Website or Web portal is required. This is a key step in attracting and retaining interested candidates. Ideally, when individuals express an interest in working for NMCP via the new Website, they are guided through the complex network of Navy/DOD Websites and tracked individually. Staff remains in steady communication with applicants to ensure continued support. In addition, on-boarding procedures continue effectively. NMCP staff may also support the process, acting as an important liaison between the organization and a potential employee.

In addition to the specific recommendations to issues and problems with the Current Process mentioned above, NMCP is already tackling hiring delays in other ways. Listed below are some ongoing endeavors at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth to attract, retain, educate, and train medical professionals with skills to meet current and future missions. Initiatives include a new civil service nurse working group, the development of a civil service

certification reimbursement program, and the Kenexa/MBS pilot program.

Civil Service Nurse Working Group

The Civil Service Nurse Working Group initiative was recently developed to give civilian nurses at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth a proactive, consolidated voice at the command. Consisting of GS/NSPS RNs and LPNs, this group has a direct link to the Command Suite. They are currently working on specific items important to their peer group, including but not limited to: compensation packages, certification reimbursement, uniform allowances, etc. With the full support of the command, this working group is an example of how Naval Medical Center Portsmouth is reviewing specific programs and innovative new ideas to enhance recruiting, retention, training, educating, and mentorship for its staff.

Civil Service Certification Reimbursement Program

The Civil Service Certification Reimbursement Program is a new plan currently being considered by the Executive Steering Committee to reimburse civil service employees the cost of advanced professional certification exam fees. This seems to be a worthwhile program, representing an important shift in the organization to retain the best of the best. Future discussions may include other forms of continuing

education and/or certification reimbursement, as with full or partial tuition repayment.

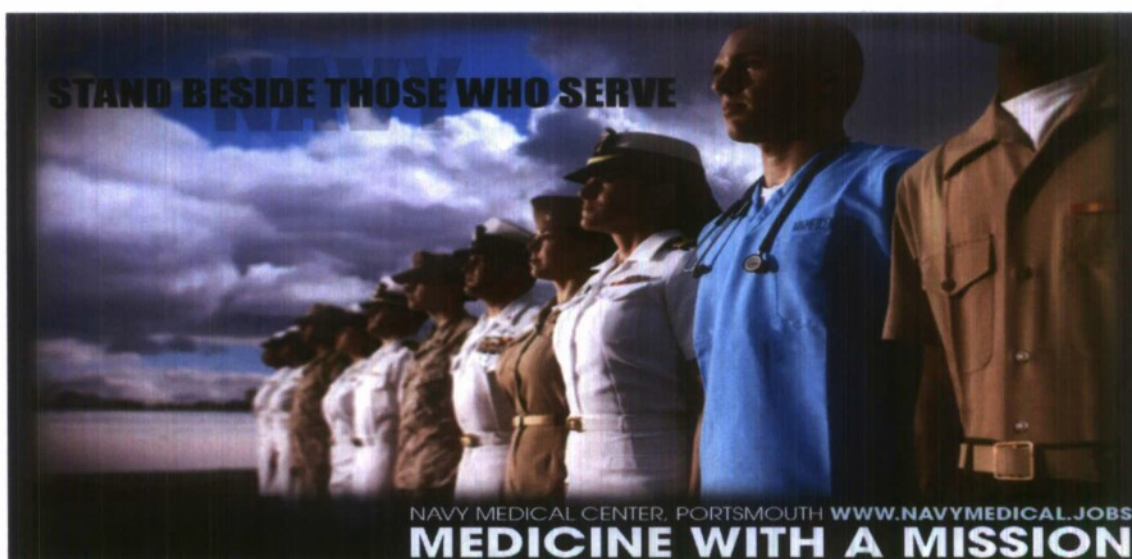
Kenexa/MBS Pilot Program

The Kenexa/MBS Pilot Program is sponsored by BUMED and allows NMCP to contract with human resources industry leaders, Kenexa Government Solutions (KGS) and Managed Business Solution (MBS). This program consists of three main components: (1) marketing/branding; (2) governmental hiring processes; (3) and applicant/candidate building, tracking, and assistance.

The first focus, marketing/branding, is something very new to Navy Medicine. Within the traditional passive recruiting model the following would occur: (1) applicants attempt to navigate sites like <http://www.usajobs.gov/> in order to complete applications and attach resumes; (2) as soon as vacancies become known, just-in-time and with much futility, staff attempt to process personnel actions in the hopes of sometime soon receiving a certification with a list of viable candidates; (3) a certification is finally issued, which in many cases, contains names of individuals who are not even interested in the job; and (4) eventually a selection is made, many times after having exhausted a certification and waiting weeks for a new one. The new model is in line with recommendations mentioned above and

incorporates a more aggressive, proactive approach to recruiting. First, two tag lines were developed with a goal of targeting a number of individuals who want to work for the government, but not necessarily in uniform. The first tag line, "Medicine on a Mission", provides an image of military healthcare as a true hospital, but one with a special mission (See Figure 3).

Figure 3. Marketing Example (Multiple Media).



The other tag line, "Stand Beside Those Who Serve", combines a powerful image of a civilian healthcare provider standing next to military healthcare providers (See Figure 4 below). Mock-up advertisements such as these have been shared with many focus groups evoking strong feelings of patriotism within participants and, as a result, are likely to dramatically increase NMCP's candidate pools. Of particular note to marketing/branding is that the

advertisements have been designed so as to be easily applied to different markets and regions. Navy Medicine's leadership, therefore, has an opportunity to broadly employ these specific marketing ideas.

Figure 4. Marketing Example (Billboard).



The second practice under review by Kenexa/MBS is the cumbersome hiring process. NMCP is currently developing new and innovative process maps and looking at correcting current inefficiencies whereby they can dramatically decrease hiring times, as with direct receipt. Under direct receipt, Management/Manpower may submit a new personnel action directly to the servicing HRSC. Direct submission reduces duplication and allows for open communication between Management/Manpower and the agency responsible for obtaining hiring certificates. The command is also

considering redirecting the efforts of the servicing HRO. Most importantly, HRO must be allowed to focus on its primary role in advising Management regarding strategic personnel decisions, as originally intended.

The third and final focus of the Kenexa/MBS project is to review candidate screening, tracking, and assistance. In addition to things like dashboards and tracking progress, this component can, and is, going a long way in reducing Management's workload. For example, when a certification is issued containing 30 names, Kenexa/MBS will call each person to see if they are interested in the position. Calling potential candidates alone may decrease the administrative hiring workload on hiring managers by more than half. Kenexa/MBS also engages in setting up interview appointments, removing yet another task from Management's shoulders. Another important aspect within this module is the candidate contact. Several candidates, especially as of late, have been lost due to lack of communication. With the new model, once a candidate is offered a job, a handoff takes place whereby Kenexa stays in constant communication with them. If nothing else, they let the potential employee know what is going on with the process. Lastly, Kenexa/MBS has been integrated into the "on boarding" process associated with new hires. The goal

is to have Kenexa/MBS track and schedule many of the required aspects of "on boarding" including physical exams, drug testing, credentialing, etc.

This new pilot program combined with recommendations mentioned previously and current projects underway should go a long way in streamlining the hiring process at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth and possibly throughout Navy Medicine as a whole.

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Appendix A

Acronyms

AMD – Activity Manning Document

BUMED – Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

CFR – Code of Federal Regulations

CIVPERS – Civilian Personnel (Department)

CNI – Chief, Naval Installations

COO – Chief Operating Officer

DCPDS – Defense Civilian Personnel Data System

DFA – Director for Administration

DMHRSi – Defense Medical Human Resource System – internet

DMS – Director for Medical Services

DOD – Department of Defense

DON – Department of the Navy

DON – Department of the Navy

EOD – Entry on Duty

ESC - Executive Steering Committee

GS – Government Service (Civil Service)

HRD – Human Resources Department

HRO – Human Resource Office

HRSC – Human Resource Service Center

HRSC-e - Human Resource Service Center – east

ICU – Intensive Care Unit

KGS – Kenexa Government Solutions

MBS – Managed Business Solutions

MTF – Military Treatment Facility

NMCP – Naval Medical Center Portsmouth

NRG – Nationwide Recruiting Group

NSPS – National Security Personnel System

OCHR – Office of Civilian Human Resources

OPM – Office of Personnel Management

PD – Position Description

PMRB – Position Management Review Board

PPP – Priority Placement Program

QC – Quality Control